

Application No. 09/745,816
Filed: December 22, 2000
TC Art Unit: 1771
Confirmation No.: 8690

REMARKS

Claims 27 and 28 have been indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Independent claim 26 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 27, and claim 27 has been cancelled. Accordingly, claim 26 and the claims dependent therefrom are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 12, 17, and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Lickfield et al.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 7-11, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23-26, 30-34, 40, 41, and 44-47 have been rejected under § 103(a) over Hall Jr. (US Pat. No. 4,841,684).

Claims 1, 2, 7-11, 17, 18, 20-22, 24, and 25 have been rejected under § 103(a) over Zygmunt (US Pat. No. 6,044,515).

Claims 1, 2, 5-12, 14-26, 29-35, and 37-47 have been rejected under § 103(a) over Arnold in view of Berger et al. (US Pat. No. 5,482,756) and Stahl (US Pat. No. 4,599,761).

Amended independent claim 1 is similar to claim 26 in that it recites a nonwoven fusible layer interposed between the fleece layer and the backing, the fleece layer needle punched to the backing. Amended independent claim 25 also recites a nonwoven fusible layer interposed between the fleece layer and the backing, the fleece layer needle punched to the backing.

In ¶ 16 of the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that the prior art fails to teach a nonwoven fusible interposed between the

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fleece layer and backing layer that are needle punched together. Accordingly, claims 1 and 25 and the claims dependent therefrom are believed to be patentable over the prior art as well.

Claims 13 and 36 have been rejected under § 103(a) over Arnold in view of Berger et al. and Stahl and further in view of Matsunaga et al. (US Pat. No. 5,554,442). These claims are believed to be in condition for allowance for the reasons set forth above with respect to claims 1 and 26. Accordingly, no further comment thereon is believed to be necessary at this time.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, all claims are believed to be in condition for allowance, and reconsideration and indication thereof is respectfully requested. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned attorney to discuss any matter that would expedite prosecution of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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